

## ***"SNAP" IN A SNAP***

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The Chicago Federal Executive Board (FEB) sponsors the Shared Neutrals ADR Program to facilitate the use of mediation among Federal agencies. Agencies do not need to have a Mediator in the SNAP program to utilize the services. The program provides a pool of qualified, objective mediators. Advantages of the service are reduced costs and increased objectivity by using mediators from outside the agency, but still a person who understands the Federal system. Participating agencies can draw upon the Program's mediation specialists and use the services free of charge, with minimal paperwork.

## ***WHY USE SNAP?***

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Successful mediation helps agencies avoid time consuming investigations, not to mention helps them to save money. The average cost for an EEOC compliant through investigations, and the final agency decision without a hearing is over \$16,000.00. Moreover, the final cost with an agency decision and a hearing, can cost over \$26,000.00 from start to finish. Can your agency afford NOT to utilize SNAP?

There is no cost for mediation through the SNAP program. However, agencies may be asked to help cover the cost of transportation for the mediator to attend the sessions. In most cases, that cost is \$50.00 or less. Now that's something to think about. Especially, when many agencies are facing cuts to their budgets every year.

## ***WHAT IS MEDIATION?***

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In mediation, a trained neutral person helps people discuss and resolve problems, or at least narrow and clarify issues. The process encourages joint problem solving in which

people gain an understanding of each others' points of view. Mediation provides a safe and confidential environment for people to talk through their issues.

Participation is voluntary and confidential. When mediation is used, both parties retain control because they each have a roll in all of the final decisions.



## ***WHEN SHOULD MEDIATION BE USED?***

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Mediate any time you have an unresolved workplace conflict. Conflict happens at work everyday. If ignored, some conflicts can increase tensions, lower productivity and erode trust in the organization. Mediation offers a positive way to settle conflict quickly and informally.

## ***WHO CAN USE SNAP SERVICES?***

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Mediation services offered by SNAP are available to all member organizations of the Chicago Federal Executive Board and its Federal Executive Association partners. SNAP mediators may mediate anywhere participating agencies are located. SNAP services are FREE, however, the requesting agency is responsible for any travel costs associated with a requested mediation. Currently there are 35 Agencies that are participating in the SNAP program, with over 70 mediators. Participating Agencies range in different sizes from large Departments to small Agencies. e.g. Department of Veterans Affairs to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC).

## ***WHO ARE THE MEDIATORS?***

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Mediators are Federal employees of agencies that participate in the SNAP program. They come from all types of Federal Agencies and levels of jobs. When mediating, these employees serve in agencies other than their own. This ensures that they are truly neutral. The mediators have completed at least 32 hours of formal mediation training and have been certified by the SNAP Committee of the Chicago Federal Executive Board.

## ***WHAT TYPES OF WORKPLACE DISPUTES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR SNAP?***

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Most of the Program's current mediations are "internal" workplace mediations. (Internal means involving employees of the participating agency only.) However, the Program is also available for external and interagency mediations on a wide range of issues such as: contracts, labor/management, etc. Agencies may choose to limit which types of cases they will refer to the Program. In addition, there are some cases that are not appropriate for mediation through this program, regardless of individual agency policy. The program does not accept cases:

- ✓ which are expected to take more than 24 working hours (the vast majority will require fewer than 24 hours);
- ✓ where both parties do not sign the mediation agreement; and
- ✓ involving criminal activity.

## SCOPE

Mediation services offered by *SNAP* shall be available for participation by all member organizations of the Chicago FEB and its Federal Executive Association partners.

Mediators from the Roster may mediate anywhere participating agencies are located. The requesting agency is responsible for any travel costs associated with a requested mediation and providing any required logistical support.

## THE PROCESS

When all parties within an agency have agreed to utilize the Shared Neutrals ADR Program, and have signed the Agreement to Mediate, the Agency Liaison will contact the *SNAP* Intake Coordinator by calling the toll-free *SNAP* Hotline (**877-886-SNAP**). The Intake Coordinator will obtain all the necessary information and will assign a mediator. The mediator will then contact the Agency Liaison to arrange a time and place for mediation. As needed, the Agency Liaison can provide necessary agency background. All information regarding the mediation is confidential. Please see the *SNAP* Handbook for further details on the process.

## AGENCY PARTICIPATION

To enter the Program, your agency must submit a letter to the *SNAP* Committee signed by the local agency head. The letter must contain the following:

- U name and office phone number of your agency liaison who is authorized to request a *SNAP* mediation,
- U any type of case which your agency wishes to exclude from the program,

- U specific forms that your agency wishes to use that differ from those included in the Handbook,
- U any other specific requirements of your agency,
- U and an explicit statement that no member of your agency will retaliate against any other member of your agency because of his/her decision to participate or withdraw from a *SNAP* mediation.

**Note:** All of the agency-specific requested items are subject to review and approval by the *SNAP* Committee. It is the responsibility of each agency to promptly notify the *SNAP* Committee of any change to their agency liaison and any requested agency-specific items not previously considered by the *SNAP* Committee.

A team is available to explain the benefits of the Program to groups in agencies that are participating or considering participation.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
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**TOLL-FREE HOTLINE: 877-886-SNAP**

**GOT A PROBLEM...  
TAKE CARE OF IT  
IN A *SNAP*!**



**"Resolving Conflicts Through  
Mediation"**

